

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-06 IO-10 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 021239Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4058

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 5074

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: CONTINUED EFFORTS TO OUST GONCALVES

REF: A. LISBON 5051 DTG 301555Z AUG75;

B. LISBON 5063 DTG 011000Z SEP 75;

C. LISBON 3951 DTG 141210Z JUL 75

SUMMARY: THE ANTUNES GROUP AND THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ACTIVELY PURSUING THEIR ANTI-PCP STRATEGIES. THE ANTUNES GROUP CONTINUES ITS EFFORT TO RESIST GONCALVES BY REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS AUTHORITY AND TODAY THEY TRY TO IMPLEMENT THEIR STRATEGY OF TAKING OVER THE INSTITUTIONS OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT STARTING WITH THE SERVICE ASSEMBLIES. THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES ARE MAINTAINING THEIR TOUGH CONDITIONS FOR ENTRY INTO AN AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH THINGS SEEM TO BE
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GOING THE WAY OF THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES, WE CAUTION AGAINST

OVEROPTIMISM. THE COMMUNISTS HAVE STRONG SUPPORT IN THE MILITARY, THE MEDIA, AND LABOR. THE PCP IS A TOUGH WELL DISCIPLINED PARTY UNLIKELY TO GIVE UP POWER EASILY. GONCALVES IS A CHARISMATIC FIGURE WHO HAS REPEATEDLY TURNED THINGS TO HIS FAVOR IN THE PAST. UNITY AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ANTUNES GROUP AND THE SOCIALIST IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. EFFORTS BY THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ANTUNES GROUP TO PREVENT THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES FROM DOMINATING A NEW GOVERNMENT ARE PROCEEDING ACTIVELY ON BOTH THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL FRONTS. THE SITUATION AS OF NOON SEPT 2 IS AS FOLLOWS:

2. POLITICAL-MILITARY ACTIVITIES: ANTUNES AND HIS SUPPORTERS CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY PUSH POLITICAL STRATEGY A (REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE GONCALVES AS CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES), AND AT THE SAME TIME, UNDERTAKE A PARALLEL EFFORT TO CARRY OUT POLITICAL STRATEGY B (TAKE OVER OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT INSTITUTIONS - REF A). THE SITUATION NOW STANDS AS FOLLOWS:

A. POLITICAL STRATEGY A:

-- THE REMOVAL OF THE POLICE, NATIONAL GUARD, AND COPCON FROM THE COMMAND OF THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES STAFF HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED.

-- MILITARY UNITS IN NORTH CONTINUE TO INSIST ON GIVING THEIR LOYALTY TO CENTRAL MILITARY REGION COMMANDER CHARAIS, A MEMBER OF THE ANTUNES NINE. BECAUSE OF HIS DIFFICULTIES IN EXERCISING COMMAND OVER ANTI-GONCALVES UNITS, LEFTIST NORTHERN REGION COMMANDER CORVACHO HAS BEEN ASKED TO COME TO LISBON BY ARMY CHIEF FABIAO.

-- THE STATEMENT BY THE AZORES MILITARY COMMAND AGAINST GONCALVES AND FOR THE NINE HAS BEEN CONFIRMED, MEANING THAT ONE OF ARMY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS OFFICERS, GEN MAGALHAES HAS DECLARED HIMSELF FOR ANTUNES GROUP.

-- AF CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA, ONCE A FENCE SITTER, HAS COME DOWN UNEQUIVOCALLY ON SIDE OF ANTUNES GROUP (REF B).

B. POLITICAL STRATEGY B: WITH THE CONVENING OF THE AFM ASSEMBLY FOR SEPT 5, THE ANTUNES GROUP SUPPORTERS HAVE BEGUN THEIR EFFORTS TO TAKE OVER THE SERVICE ASSEMBLIES IN ORDER TO RESTRUCTURE THE AFM ASSEMBLY -- THUS ENSURING THAT ANTUNES GROUP WILL CONTROL THE "RESTRUCTURED" REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

-- ARMY ASSEMBLY IS MEETING THIS MORNING, SEPT 2. WE HAVE
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REPORTS THAT COMMUNIST-LINING COL VARELA GOMES AND CAPT CLEMENTE OF J-5 NOTORIETY HAVE ALREADY BEEN PURGED FROM THE ARMY ASSEMBLY AND SIMILAR PURGES ARE UNDERWAY IN NORTHERN UNITS. INTERESTINGLY, THE ASSEMBLY IS BEING HELD IN TANCOS, SITE OF THE AIR FORCE PARACHUTE REGIMENT, ONE OF PORTUGAL'S MOST CONSERVATIVE MILITARY UNITS.

-- AIR FORCE ASSEMBLY WILL BE HELD SEPT 3. AF CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA ISSUED ORDER ALTERING METHOD OF SELECTION OF DELEGATES

TO ASSEMBLY, MAKING SENIORITY A PRINCIPAL CRITERION IN SELECTION PROCESS. EFFECT WILL BE TO ELIMINATE SO-CALLED "PROGRESSIVE" DELEGATES WHO CONTROLLED ASSEMBLY.

-- NAVY ASSEMBLY ALSO MEETS TOMORROW, SEPT. 3. NAVY ASSEMBLY IS STILL DOMINATED BY LEFTIST PRO-GONCALVES SENTIMENT. ADM ROSA COUTINHO IS EXPECTED BACK FROM THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN TIME FOR ASSEMBLY AND MAY LEAD IT IN HIS CAPACITY AS PRESUMPTIVE REPLACEMENT FOR AZEVEDO AS HEAD OF THE NAVY. POLITICAL OBSERVERS WILL BE WATCHING COUTINHO, A FAST ON HIS FEET OPPORTUNIST, WITH GREAT CARE. COUTINHO, AN OCEANOGRAPHER, IS QUICK TO DETECT WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING.

3. PARTY ACTIVITIES: PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO'S FIRST-ROUND DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERSHIP OF PS, PCP AND PPD, AS EXPECTED, FAILED TO PRODUCE AGREEMENT RE FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. PS AND PPD REMAIN ADAMANT IN REFUSING TO JOIN NEW COALITION EFFORT UNLESS CONDITIONS ARE MET WHICH WILL ASSURE EFFECTIVE POLITICAL PARTY ROLE.

4. PPD ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL RUI MACHETE CONFIRMED AUGUST 31 THAT PPD PRICE FOR JOINING NEW GOVERNMENT WAS SATISFACTION OF SERIES OF CONDITIONS GENERALLY THE SAME AS THOSE WHICH IT HAD ENUMERATED WHEN IT LEFT THE FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT (REF C). BOTH PPD AND PS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT GONCALVES IS UNACCEPTABLE AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF AND THAT ANY NEW GOVERNMENT MUST INCLUDE PARTICIPATION BY MELO ANTUNES GROUP. COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE.

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5. CUNHAL HAS MET WITH AZEVEDO AND PUBLICALLY URGED FORMATION OF BROAD POPULAR FRONT, INCLUDING SOCIALISTS BUT EXCLUDING PPD. SOCIALISTS HAVE REJECTED ANY FORMULA WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE PPD AND HAVE REFUSED TO JOIN COALITION WITH COMMUNISTS UNLESS CLEAR DEMONSTRATIONS ARE FORTHCOMING OF PCP'S WILLINGNESS TO "PLAY THE DEMOCRATIC GAME."

6. COMMENT: DESPITE THE APPARENT GROWING SUCCESS OF THE ANTUNES GROUP'S EFFORTS, WE REITERATE THE CAUTIONS EXPRESSED IN REF B. THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES HAVE STRONG SUPPORT IN THE MILITARY, THE MEDIA, AND IN LABOR. THE PCP IS A TOUGH WELL-ORGANIZED PARTY WITH A CLANDESTINE MENTALITY. HAVING TASTED POWER IT WILL NOT BE PUSHED ASIDE EASILY. GONCALVES IS A CHARISMATIC FIGURE, WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE PAST HIS ABILITY TO TURN INDIVIDUALS AND MEETINGS AROUND. GONCALVES' COMMUNIST-LINING MILITARY SUPPORTERS HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE BY
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RESORTING TO DESPERATE LAST DITCH EFFORTS TO RETAIN POWER. UNITY AND FIRMNESS OF PURPOSE BETWEEN "THE NINE" AND THE PS REMAIN IMPORTANT.
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